

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
17 August 1985

A SOBERING TRIP THROUGH THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY STAT
BY JIM ANDERSON
WASHINGTON

In 1981, Martin Miller discovered by chance that there is a serious mistake in U.S. government publications about the legal ownership of the West Bank, occupied since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war by Israel.

The discovery led him on a four-year odyssey through the snail-like workings of the federal bureaucracy that left Miller a lot more cynical about the government he used to work for.

Miller, a retired Treasury Department employee, found U.S. publications gave ownership of the 2,200-mile-square area to Jordan, but Jordan's 1950 annexation of the West Bank is not recognized by any government except Britain and Pakistan. In 1974, even Jordan gave up its own claim to the area at the Rabat conference.

The United States considers the area to be occupied territory, the ownership to be determined by negotiation, but the U.S. maps don't reflect this. The area is shown on U.S. maps to be an occupied part of Jordan, something that even Jordan does not now claim.

Miller, filled with confidence in the essential goodness of the U.S. government, pointed out the cartographic mistake in a polite letter and even had it brought up in public at the State Department daily press briefing.

Miller received a letter from the State Department geographer saying the department would tell all government publications that the West Bank is not under the sovereignty of any Middle East country (including Jordan).

Two years later, Miller trudged from the State Department to Capitol Hill to the Central Intelligence Agency. The State Department announced that the mistaken map would be changed in the next edition of the "World Factbook," which is published by the CIA, under the policy direction of the State Department.

The map was corrected, but the accompanying text was still wrong, giving back to Jordan what the map took away.

The matter was brought up at the State Department Press briefing, and spokesman John Hughes, whose Public Affairs branch is in charge of the subject, promised that something would be done.

In fact, nothing was done.

Miller then called in one of his big IOUs, a casual friendship with George Shultz, now secretary of state, but head of the Treasury when Miller was pushing defense bonds.

Shultz agreed to see Miller, who quickly explained the story to Shultz in his seventh-floor office. Shultz promised quick action.

Another year passed and Miller, carrying a briefcase full of letters, maps, books, and promises, went from the CIA to Capitol Hill and back to the State Department.

Continued